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LABOUR ORGANISER

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THE LABOUR ORGANISER

EDITOR: A. L. WILLIAMS

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PRICE FIVEPENCE

Local Election Results

IKE Parliamentary by-elections, local council elections can prove deceptive when used to detect political trends. In local elections, the issues are different from those in Parliamentary elections and people react differently. In the recent local elections, in some towns Labour councillors suffered defeat, because they had raised municipal house rents as a result of the financial policy of the Tory government!

Also large numbers of seats may change hands, but the gains and losses can be due to a very small turnover of votes. This is seen in the results of the Pancras borough elections. Labour lost 10 seats, but 9 of these were in one ward and the difference between the top Tory and top Labour votes was only 138. In this ward, only 36.6 per cent of the electors bothered to vote, and though elsewhere the percentage polled tended to be higher than this, it was nearly everywhere much less than the percentage usual in Parliamentary elections.

But Labour's net loss of 322 seats in this year's local elections represents a defeat which cannot be accepted complacently, especially as these losses were spread throughout the whole country. Compared with last year, there was a strong tendency for the Tory vote to rise and the Labour vote to fall, and even where the Labour vote did rise, the rise was not as high as that of the Tory vote.

It is clear that abstention is no longer causing the Tories as much trouble as it has done for the past few years, and this was to be expected as a General Election came closer. What was unexpected was that the Labour vote fell in so many places, especially in view of the adoption of more efficient election systems.

Inevitably, the local election results will turn the spotlight on what Party workers have been doing during the past three years. During all that time, the emphasis has been on building up records of Labour support and the creation of calling-up machinery to ensure that a high proportion of those supporters vote.

Not Enough

The local elections have demonstrated that election records and calling-up systems are not enough to ensure victory, but this does not mean that they are not an essential ingredient of victory. It is true that marking a register can become an end in itself, whereas it is only a means to an end. There is not much point in knowing who are supporters and who are opponents un'less something is done about it.

Many investigations prove that, having decided their allegiance to a political party, electors very rarely change, so that their identification is a primary task of any efficient electoral organisation. But when an elector

says that he is Labour, it does not follow that in any particular election he will actually vote. He will vote Labour if he makes the effort to go to the polling station.

It is the job of the local organisation to stimulate him to action and this is not merely a matter of calling-up on polling day. Nor is it enough to bring supporters into touch with the Party during an election campaign. Contact should be maintained between elections, and this can be done in many ways.

When leaflets and broadsheets are distributed, they should be distributed to the homes of supporters, and of doubtfuls too. By restricting distribution in this way, it is possible to do the job economically and yet achieve the required result. If a door-to-door sale of a Party publication is undertaken, it will produce much better results if restricted to supporters and doubtfuls, as recent experience in the sale of *The Future Labour Offers You* clearly proves.

Lively Interest

Supporters are likely to take a lively interest in the Party only if the Party appears to be alive and takes an interest in them. When the local party is holding a social function or a public meeting, a personal invitation addressed to known supporters will have better results than advertisements in the Press, or leaflets distributed indiscriminately.

Many parties have not enough members, and none of them complains that it has too many workers. Records of supporters are the source from which both members and workers can be recruited. The constantly repeated complaint that it is easy to recruit members, but not collectors, is really an admittance of our own failure to do a proper organising job. The big membership parties usually are the parties which have the most efficient collecting systems, so that it is apparent that it is possible both to recruit members and

to retain them if the job is tackled wholeheartedly.

An article in the current issue and previous contributions illustrate how many people there are among supporters who are willing to do some work for the Party when they are asked and when it is work within their capacity. A systematic distribution and collection of *Campaign Cards* will produce thousands of people from among supporters who will be willing to help at the General Election, and many of these helpers can be drawn into activity now if the effort is made.

Certain Value

There is one pre-election activity about the value of which there can be no doubt, and that is the registering of supporters for a postal vote, since this gives the means of voting to people who otherwise are almost certain not to vote. Without a marked register it is not possible to obtain a substantial number of postal votes, but a determined and persistent drive among Labour supporters will give results, the experience of West Woolwich and Dover has shown.

But the registration of postal votes is not the end of the job. At an election, special literature needs to be addressed to them and they should be canvassed on the despatch of postal ballot papers to make certain that the postal votes are used.

Publicity and propaganda are not a substitute for the detailed job of building up records, but records should be used to make the publicity and propaganda pay. To paraphrase Stalin, political agitation and organisation are not opposites but are twins, and this is the lesson of recent local elections.

Situations Vacant

DEPTFORD C.L.P. invites applications for the post of full-time Secretary/Agent. The appointment will be made in consultation with the National Executive Committee. Salary in accordance with the National Agreement. Application forms can be obtained from Mr. A. J. Hill, 435 New Cross Road, New Cross, London, S.E.14, to whom they should be returned not later than 22nd June, 1959.

ONE of the oddest pursuits, to which, nevertheless, no small number of people seem addicted, is the crying of sinking fish. It is not easy to diagnose this malodorous activity. No two psychiatrists would agree upon it; but it may be remarked in passing that there is no record of any two of them agreeing upon anything, except in impressing on the gullible world the importance of psychiatry.

Let us, then, refrain from calling in these professional darkeners of counsel, and in the plain language of the populace seek for an explanation. No shopkeeper has ever been known to admit, much less advertise, rotten apples or squashy tomatoes; although some have been known furtively to sell them.

Why, then, do certain people shout themselves hoarse in declaring that the content of their wares is the reverse of agrant and that they are, in fact, putrid? They cannot expect to build up their sales. They do not pretend to wish to do so. But they persist ardently and vocously in what is nowadays called 'enigration', and appear to get a lot of satisfaction out of it. Can it be that the practice is a sort of drug for a jaundiced soul?

THE Labour Party has long suffered — from this strange activity on the part of its candid friends who are either inside the Party or on its fringes. Generally, the Party has taken it all with a good-natured shrug, and gone on doing the best it could. Latterly, however, there has been rather a lot of it, and somebody really ought to put in a good word for the Party, although there are some circles where this is the suruest way to get yourself a bad name.

These ruminations have been provoked by some recent correspondence in our good Old Father *Times*. A Mr. Dennis Trotter, describing himself as the retiring chairman of Oxford University Labour Club, at the end of April filled half a column with a choice selection of all the best words peddled by the immature *gnoscenti*, and not one of them was a good word for the Labour Party.

Meteorites Don't Last

Suffering from "a bitter-tasting sense of disillusion", he finds us a pretty poor lot. To him, "the Labour Party is a timid, excessively cautious association for the middle-aged". Plaintively he asks, "cannot we end this smug euphoria?" If we cannot, he demands to know, "why should we help Mr. Gaitskell?"

AH, what some of us have missed through being denied the benefits of a university education! During the recent weeks thousands and thousands of dogged and faithful Party members, careless of the agonies of this youth, have been spending what time they had at liberty from the tasks of getting a living or running their homes in such "uninspiring" behaviour as writing envelopes and poll-cards, going round the streets delivering election addresses, wooing electors on their doorsteps (but not at mealtimes), labouring in committee rooms, fetching up the reluctant voters, and such like.

And, not being the sublimated products of our scholastic forcing-houses, it did not occur to them that they were "helping Mr. Gaitskell".

THIS young man has been favoured with a small part on the stage of the *Labour Organiser*, not because of his importance but because he is part of a stream, affected by some frothy effluent, which runs strongly through the universities and more weakly in plenty of other places. One does not have to spend many years in the Labour Party to notice that quite a lot of university characters come into the Labour Party for a while and then go out.

Loyalty may be "uninspiring", no doubt. Fixed stars don't attract attention to themselves. Meteorites do; but they don't last. In the cosmos the stars count for more. Even those of the smallest magnitude will still be there æons after the brightest meteorites have burnt themselves out. Let Mr. Gaitskell take comfort.

Did You Watch the Votes Counted

VIGILANCE at the count has always been stressed—and is usually exercised—but this year's local elections have produced further examples of serious errors.

In one case it was subsequently noticed that the combined votes of the candidates, plus the spoiled papers, were 50 short of the total number of votes cast! The candidate declared elected has a majority of 80, so, at first sight, even if all the 50 missing votes had been for the unsuccessful candidate it would not have affected the result.

Inevitably, however, it is reasonable to wonder whether that was the only error in the count. It is not likely that 50 ballot papers just disappeared. Supposing some of them had been counted in bundles of 50 instead of 25. The result could have been much closer, a re-count might have revealed the discrepancy, and the other candidate found to have a majority.

The only legal procedure for questioning an election is by an Election Petition. This is extremely expensive. The High Court may require up to £500 to be deposited as security of costs—and the final apportionment of costs might be even higher.

On the other hand, a somewhat similar case occurred last year, which Len Sims referred to in the June *Labour Organiser*, and which was amicably settled without recourse to legal action. It was subsequently learned that the Returning Officer sought advice.

It was suggested that, subject to the agreement of the candidates concerned, a new count should be undertaken. The candidates did agree and the result was reversed. It should be emphasised that this was an entirely voluntary arrangement, and could not be demanded.

Incidents such as these should have a salutary effect on those Returning Officers whose interpretation of "reasonable facilities for overseeing the proceedings", is a very limited one. It often happens that while the facilities for counting agents observing the opening and counting of the ballot papers are reasonable, little opportunity is given to the Election Agent to note the Returning Officer's agreed figures for each box.

Even when you have had this information, its significance can be overlooked in the excitement which the latter stages of

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Returning Officers and Town Clerks, as well as Candidates and Agents, have their problems during the local elections. This account of two of the more unusual queries addressed to Transport House may be of interest and use.

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the count might create. So make a note now—it might be useful next time, even a small discrepancy would justify a request for a re-count—and you might win—or lose—a seat.

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IT is often a convenient and economical arrangement for casual vacancies to be filled at the ordinary annual election of councillors, but there is one feature of this procedure which could create an unexpected problem, that is seniority.

Section 67 of the Local Government Act, 1933, lays down the procedure which this course is adopted. The candidate elected by the smallest number of votes is deemed to be elected to fill the casual vacancy, and should there be an equal number of votes, it is determined by lot.

If, however, the number of nominally candidates is not more than the number of regular and casual vacancies to be filled, all the candidates will be declared elected by the Returning Officer, but will be left to the next meeting of the council to decide which councillor should fill the respective vacancies.

From enquiries we have received, it was apparent that some people assumed that retiring councillors would automatically continue for the normal term of office and that casual vacancies would be filled by any new candidates. This is not so.

It could well happen in a contested election that one of the new candidates would receive more votes than a long serving member of the council. Similarly, in an uncontested election the normal and casual vacancies must be filled by the drawing of lots—and again—a senior councillor may be unlucky in the draw.

The view is held, however, that, subject to agreement by the councillors concerned, an amicable arrangement could be made which would enable them to fill such vacancies as they had agreed upon.

189 POSTAL VOTES IN A MONTH

by Richard Knowles

In the early days of March, the N.E.C. decided to open its heart and make £100 available to do some part-time work on postal votes in this marginal seat. This help was augmented by one of the unions making a member of their organisation available to us for a period of eight weeks. So we sat down and thought about

After all, the N.E.C. money does not fall from the sky, and our comrades in Smith Square have no 'tote' football pool to dig into. Their money comes the hard way, and they want to know where it has gone.

We started off by circulating forms something like the one in last month's *Organiser*—asking the active workers whether they could advise us of supporters who were, in their opinion, entitled to postal votes. This is the usual result of any circular, but five per cent returned their forms and the rest forgot about them. But it was a start, and the two excellent women canvassers we employed were able to start from something more than scratch.

In rather less than four weeks, they had secured some 189 postal votes; mostly for sickness qualification, though some have been for occupation and some for removals. They expect that the effect is cumulative—Mrs. Brown will suggest that Mrs. Smith along the road also is entitled to a postal vote. Now comes the benefit of a marked register in the office. We call up Mrs. Smith and see whether she is in our fold and, if not—well—know what action to take.

Full Co-operation

The two women members have worked from the Party office, in full co-operation with the wards and women's sections. This last is very important for the sections have much more information than the wards, and how many myths have been

exploded! That old one about not getting the co-operation of the doctors. We asked the canvassers to note the name of the doctor and then we took the forms along to him in batches of a half-dozen or so at a time. We have dealt with some fifteen doctors now and have found them all willing and anxious to help.

One or two forms have come back to me with a comment like this: "I am happy to say that X is, as far as I know, in very good health. He is out and about the town every day and I cannot honestly certify his statement as correct." Well, that is bound to happen. Some of our supporters want things the easy way and are too tired to go out and vote.

Doctor's Mistake

One of the doctors rang us on nomination day and said, "I've made a mistake. I have refused to sign one of your forms and now realise that Mrs. Y will be having her baby in the week of the municipal elections." My young colleague in the office pointed out that the remedy was in his hands, and he went along to his patient with another form, signed the certificate, and took the R.P.F.7 into the Registration Officer himself. And he is marked down on our canvass as a Tory!

I cannot believe that the doctors in Dover and Deal are different from others. What concerns them is their patients' medical condition not their political views.

We have also found out that canvassing for the postal vote is a job which must be done in a single-minded way. You cannot confuse it with other things. It is hard, humdrum, slogging work, but if it is tackled to the exclusion of everything else, then results can be obtained. Do not attempt to tie it up with a membership drive, or with ordinary canvassing.

Another thing that has been learnt

'I don't know—probably gone home to get her husband's lunch.'

is that the job *must* be carried through to the end. We are entering each postal vote into a ledger as it is contacted and we have divided the ledger into five columns, apart from the name, address, and other essential details. These are headed: date of first contact—by whom contacted—doctor—date form completed—date sent to the R.O.

We are in the picture all the time and no form is left 'in the air' at any stage. Not until the date sent to the R.O. has been entered in the last column do we consider that the job has been finished.

Trade Unions

Finally, the Trade Unions. Send them forms if you like. I have tried it, five per cent will be returned—perhaps. Go along and see the secretary of the bricklayers, ask him who is working out of town and only come home at week-ends. See the secretary of the miners and find out who are 100 per cent silicosis. The seamen will be most co-operative and will furnish a list of their members, if only you will call and see their secretary. So will the A.S.L.E.F. and the N.U.R.

It will be little use sitting waiting for the forms to come back, because they won't do so. Take the form with you when you call to see the secretary and fill it in yourself. When you have got the names of those concerned, make arrangements for the canvassers to call on them. It may be better if you can get an active trade union member to do this.

Surely some of the parties who are not short of cash could do this valuable job without the help of Head Office. We do not propose to relax until (a) we have at least 1,000/1,200 Labour postal votes recorded, or (b) we run out of cash.

HOW many times have we heard conversations like this in committee rooms? Why cannot vital information be listed on charts and put up for everyone to see?

Why should it be necessary to chase the agent, or someone else, often to find they are not available, or to interrupt them when they are busy, to obtain information which should be on display?

The following information should be charted and put in a prominent position in each committee room:

1. Roster of number takers, committee room helpers and messengers.
2. Names and addresses of persons who have promised to knock-up and the times they are available.
3. Names and addresses of car owners and the times they have promised to report.
4. Addresses of committee rooms in the ward, name of person in charge, and telephone number.
5. A map of the ward.

There are two obvious advantages of having this information before everyone's eyes. There is no need to find Mr. Smith to know who should be at 'so and so' polling station, or to know who will be working in the committee room at a particular time.

The other advantage is—AND THIS IS IMPORTANT—if there are gaps anywhere, if there are times when number takers, committee room helpers, or messengers are still required, then the fact is known to all and there is some prospect of something being done about it.

If the information is not charted, if the roster is kept in someone's pocket, the gap is not discovered until the break occurs, perhaps at a busy period, and panic measures have to be taken to fill the gap.

Charts are a great help to efficiency in the committee room and can help considerably in the smooth running of the election day organisation. Have another look through the two Head Office publications, *Election Forms and Charts* and *Illustrations of Committee Rooms*. They contain a wealth of ideas which can be adapted to make your election campaign and polling day organisation better still.

STANLEY PAIGE

Display Election Information

'Who is number taking at Larkhill School?'

'No idea—ask Mrs. Smith. She is responsible for finding number takers.'

'Where's Mrs. Smith?'

How to Recruit Election Workers

In our local parties and ward committees we recruit an army of members; we compile a marked register of supporters yet, when a battle takes place, as in the local elections, we do little to mobilise this army of support.

Although in many places we make elaborate plans for the campaign, type promise sheets and prepare committee rooms, we fail to tell our members and supporters the plan of campaign, the part they can play and, then, even where the battle headquarters are situated.

Too often the officers and key members are the only workers—they work in isolation. They depend on the same old faithfuls to turn up to help on polling day and during the campaign. There is no positive effort to bring more and more people into activity.

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We must ask the individual members for help, particularly the nine out of ten who do not attend meetings. It is all very well to say they should come to meetings—the point is that they do not, but many of them are prepared to do a specific job of work.

We have amassed a great deal of information on the marked register. Let's use this information. Let's call Labour members and supporters to tell them what they are prepared to do.

Let me give you one example of the kind of information you can obtain by a personal approach. In one polling district in a marginal constituency a canvass was made on 70 members living in 50 houses. There was no reply at 7 houses so the following offers of help were obtained from 43 houses:

Exhibit window bills	...	39
Assist in canvass	...	1
Car for election work	...	1
Take numbers at polling stations	10	
Help in committee room	...	9

Deliver leaflets	...	16
Write envelopes	...	28
Messengers	...	3
Knock up on polling day	...	12
New collectors	...	2

Three new members were enrolled, two of them have since been quite active and assisted with canvassing.

Having obtained promises of help, our next task is to allocate the work and then to let each person know what is expected of him. For instance, tell each person who has offered to deliver literature what area has been allocated to him.

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Don't wait for the persons who have promised to knock-up to report to the committee room on polling day. Tell them for what streets you would like them to be responsible and arrange for them to pick up the promise sheets at set times, or even for the sheets to be taken to them.

Don't wait until the eve of poll to make out the roster for committee room help or for tellers at the polling stations—make out the rosters well in advance of time. Put a copy on the wall in the committee room so that everyone can see it—and send a copy to all concerned before polling day.

Don't just wait for car owners to turn up. Why not invite them to meet the candidate and agent before the campaign commences, discuss the plans with them and ask how much help and what time they can give?

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Elementary? Just plain common sense? Of course it is—yet it is just these plain, elementary, basic details of organisation which are not being attended to in many, many places.

We must have more active workers if we are to poll our maximum Labour vote. We can get them only by telling our members and supporters exactly what we want and by asking them to help.

We have taken years and gone to great trouble to build up our marked register—let us use the information it contains to recruit more workers for general party work and for elections.

Inadequate systems of calling-up may lose seats. The following two articles are contributions to polling day efficiency.

Review Call-up Systems

DURING last month's local elections, many of our parties will have been trying out the four-fold knocking-up pads for the first time. Others were probably trying out Stym cards—or variations of that or some other system, such as the individual or household promise cards.

Some (a decreasing number, thank Heaven!) doubtless continued in their own sweet way without the slightest semblance of anything which readers of this journal would recognise as being any system at all.

In many cases where such attempts to improve polling day organisation have been made, there's probably been an 'inquest' by now, and woe betide the poor agent if a seat or two were lost. His 'new-fangled' system will probably be blamed, and comparisons (more odious than usual) will be made with the results in neighbouring areas where success was achieved "without all this high falutin' nonsense".

So it might be worth while to remind ourselves of the purpose—and the limitations—of polling systems, and to consider how we can best win over those of our election workers who seem so implacably conservative in their attitude towards any change in procedure.

GOOD MARGIN

Polling day is the culmination of our efforts—the day when we hope to mobilise the supporters who have been identified by our canvass and stimulated by our propaganda. Yet, even with the perfect polling day organisation, we can't really expect to win unless we have a good margin of 'promises'—and, what's more—'promises' who can be persuaded to vote.

At a Parliamentary election in a marginal constituency it is likely that public interest in the election will be

higher than in the 'safe' constituencies and it is estimated that an efficient polling day system can increase candidate's poll by five per cent. In a local election, where the poll is usually fairly low, good organisation could have a more significant effect. But no polling system can make people vote if they are determined not to!

VARIOUS SYSTEMS

The merits and de-merits of the various polling day systems have been widely discussed in these columns and at many schools and consultations. Harry Gibbs and Ron Brewer have something more to say about them in last month's *Labour Organiser*. While my own experience leads me to favour the four-fold knocking-up pads, I was interested to read of the experiments at agents' schools which had proved other systems to be as speedy when working under pressure.

Whichever system is used, one must endorse Ron Brewer's comment on the need for more training of committee room operators. This need for training ties up with my second point, which is to emphasise the importance of convincing your workers that any 'new' system is superior to the one already in use. It is as well to start off by convincing yourself!

So look carefully at your present system. If it has produced good results in the past, it may be better to concentrate on perfecting it rather than changing it, for there is little point in changing over just for the sake of doing so. If, on the other hand, you are convinced of your 'new' system's superiority, then you must take some trouble to get the support of those who will be expected to work it.

It's not just a case of getting your Executive Committee to agree, for many of the people who 'man' your

mittee rooms may not be members that—or any other—committee. You will need to prepare sufficient material to give them an adequate demonstration of the system, and an opportunity of trying it themselves.

If you are still in the experimental stage, you might have the opportunity of putting the new system on trial at some by-election, but if you do, pay great attention to its detailed working, and see that the proper tools are available for the

pendding a pound or two on canvass pads, checkers' pads, and four-fold sets of promise cards seems to horrify some, who will cheerfully and indiscriminately spend much greater sums in other directions.

Prior demonstration and training should

be followed up with brief but clear instructions which should be available in every committee room. Once the operators understand the system, there will be less likelihood of varied interpretation and improvisation which sometimes 'gums up the works'.

My earlier statement that polling day is the culmination of our efforts might be further emphasised by claiming that it is the last two or three hours of that day which are the vital ones.

In that all too brief period, when the committee room operators are working at full capacity, the result of the election in many marginal constituencies may well depend on the efficiency of the system you are using. So it is well worth giving some serious attention to it NOW.

Lewis Grey

Developing a New System

HE debate on Harrow East has once more brought to the fore the controversy over systems. This is all the good, though I would like to add a cautionary note. More and more I see that less experienced workers tend to look upon one system or another as a gimmick for winning elections.

This is indeed unfortunate, for no matter how good the system, unless there has been a good canvass and all other work carried through, it is likely that the Labour poll will be nothing like it should be.

Having given that word of warning, I would like to outline a system which we recently helped to develop and which is a successful marriage between the pasted register and the group knock-up.

Most pasted register systems only require one register to be used, but for this purpose, two are required. The first is put onto a printed card 5 in. x 9 in. It is pasted tight up to the left-hand edge. The card contains columns for three

sets of canvassing. These columns are on the right-hand side of the card.

The second card is plain and slightly smaller in width, being only 4½ in. x 9 in. The other copy of the register is pasted on to this, again close to the left-hand edge, and completely aligned with the register pasted on the printed card. The printed card is used for canvassing and the other card for knocking up.

Just prior to polling day the cards are prepared in the following manner: The canvass card is colour coded. This is done by making use of the natural space on the printed register between the electoral number and the elector's name.

The usual code is red for favourables, blue for others. Incidentally, I do not find it necessary to make great coloured blobs as is sometimes done with pasted card systems, a simple dash mark is quite sufficient.

The twin card is then held against the canvass card and all names except

those of the favourables are crossed through.

The cards are then inserted in envelope slots on a board. The printed canvass card goes underneath, and the plain twin card on top. There is at once to view two sets of numbers, one of which is colour coded. The intention is that the canvass card shall now act as the wall sheet, and the twin card for knocking up.

As the polled numbers are received from the polling station, the clerk crosses through the numbers on both cards and in the case of Labour voters only, the name on the top card. This can be carried through in one simple operation.

The bottom card is always static on polling day. The top card is sent out, and the knocker-up calls only those persons whose names remain open on the card. When the card is returned to the committee room it is held against the twin card, and numbers polled during its absence are easily ascertained and struck through.

EARLY EVENING

In the early evening, the system of knocking up changes. Whereas the day-time workers, having been steadily knocking through street by street, a previously appointed group leader now takes charge of certain streets. Sufficient group leaders are appointed and the area so divided that the whole polling district is covered. The group leader sets off with his band of workers and the knocking up cards for his area. This team remains in the area the whole of the evening.

In the committee room the polled numbers continue to be eliminated from the first card. From time to time messengers travel to the group leader with a slip showing the numbers polled from his cards. He crosses these off and carries on with the canvassing, either until there is nobody left to vote or until the end of the poll.

I have tried to explain very simply what seems to me to be a very easily operated and efficient system. The

printed cards are now a stock line at least, one printer to the movement. Pasting up work can be done long before an election. The polling day preparation is simple enough to be done at the last minute so that canvassing can continue to the end.

Ron Brewer

LETTER

Harrow East Again

DURING the by-election in Harrow East, Mr. Gibbs worked in our ward one small part of our constituency. Did he know anything about South Stanmore prior to the election? It would seem from his comments in last month's *Labour Organiser* that he did not.

Having arrived on 15th March, did Mr. Gibbs think that only then would South Stanmore make efforts to rally local workers? Oh, really! This was done weeks before and every available person was on the job before Mr. Gibbs arrived. How then could he know what sort of call was made to workers in the area?

Local people left out in the cold. Certainly not in South Stanmore. Those who work in elections plus others who answered our call worked hard and did all they were able. Nobody in South Stanmore was slighted. Of course, there is one important point to mention, South Stanmore was happy to have the aid of agents from other areas.

We have a good organisation, but we are always ready and willing to learn. When an agent came to take charge, he was made welcome and given all the assistance possible. When others, including Mr. Gibbs, followed, the same welcome and help were given to them. We can assure you that if anyone had been slighted we would have taken strong action to right it, but this was at no time necessary.

We know we had a great many workers from outside, and we appreciated them who wouldn't? The small band of workers in South Stanmore could not have coped without them. But how could Mr. Gibbs possibly know the extent of the workers within our ward when he spent one day at our Central Committee Room and then went to take charge of a polling area with 1,615 electors?

Are We Making a Mistake?

In recent months I have often thought of my contention that the Party needed to do much more to *make more realists* instead of thinking the next election can be won just by finding out who are already Labour. I am more than ever convinced the emphasis is all wrong. May I draw your attention to what opened in the by-elections in the more remote areas—Galloway, E. Aberdeen, Carrington, etc.? And in divisions like Devon, St. Ives, N. Cornwall, Torquay, Penitton, and others in Wales, Scotland, and parts of England. There seems to be a real chance of the Liberals doing well. My guess is that in some areas, Labour propaganda and publicity is practically non-existent and when it exists is of poor quality. I honestly believe that the idea of full-time propaganda officers, at least in rural areas, would be worthy of option.

Publicist's Job

Consider what someone based on Exeter, and covering Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, could do. Working, like an insurance inspector, in a constituency area, he would get literature actually distributed by giving parties the necessary time. He would give loudspeaker addresses and train others how to do it. No doubt readers have noted that TV in the U.S. is now no longer an election factor, but that candidates are back to the personal 'meeting the people'. He would encourage canvassing. He would teach publicity work.

Half-a-dozen such publicists in some areas (East Anglia is another place suitable) would do permanent good to the movement. It would stimulate local activity, make some fresh converts, and persuade some people to do the organising afterwards. Nobody can make bricks out of straw, and no organiser can convert people who do not want to be converted. They will not want to be organised until they are enthused. Incidentally, I think the Party TV broadcasts are quite good, but the sad thing is that lots of people just switch off. And I have a belief that people are getting used to having TV and that it is

no longer the time-consuming menace it was.

Perhaps I'd better make it quite clear that I do not say a word against the importance of organisation. We *must* have good organisation. But we can't get away from the fact that the most important thing of all is *SPIRIT*.

RICHARD WEVELL

There is a great deal to be said for Mr. Wevell's view that recording Labour support is not enough and that the Party needs to engage in publicity and propaganda to win fresh support, but as this month's leading article says, these two jobs are not mutually exclusive.

A considerable amount of publicity of the first quality is now being issued from Transport House, and it should be one of the main jobs of our Constituency Labour Parties to see that this is put into the hands of those likely to be influenced favourably by it.

*It is no use saying that this publicity is of poor quality: it is generally admitted that *The Future Labour Offers You* is the best piece of political propaganda published in this country for years and years and there is no difficulty in selling it—parties in backward areas have sold 4,000 copies, while other parties have not sold 400, so it is not the quality of the propaganda that is to blame.*

The Party is using a propaganda van during the coming summer and the results of the experiment will be examined with great interest, but it would need a considerable number of such vans staffed with Propaganda Officers to make any impact on the marginal constituencies, let alone difficult constituencies in rural areas.

The effectiveness of television as a propaganda medium will decline as time goes on, but it is certain that at the moment it is one of the best means of propaganda we have and that the National Executive Committee is right in devoting considerable resources to it, even though this might be at the expense of other forms of propaganda.

EDITOR.

A MIDDLESBROUGH CAMPAIGN

THE idea of this special campaign arose from discussions between the Rt. Hon. H. A. Marquand, M.P., and Mr. C. E. Shopland, the agent for Middlesbrough. The campaign ran from 6th April to 11th April. It was designed chiefly to stir public interest in the Middlesbrough West constituency, where the Tory majority in 1955 was 7,361.

There are good reasons for regarding this constituency as marginal in present circumstances. Part of the campaign, however, covered sections of the Middlesbrough East and Sedgefield constituencies, where there were good Labour majorities in 1955. An important section of the highly marginal Cleveland constituency (Labour majority 181 in 1955) was also covered. To conclude the campaign an afternoon was spent in Stockton-on-Tees (Labour majority 3,815 in 1955).

Fundamental to the campaign was the conviction that Labour must 'meet the people' rather than expect the people to 'meet Labour'. It was therefore deemed essential to concentrate the bulk of the campaign into the days from Monday to Friday, since Saturdays and Sundays are now more than ever devoted to recreation and entertainment.

Detailed Planning

The detailed planning and supervision of the campaign was done by Mr. Shopland. A van of exceptional quality, which could carry speakers, canvassers and literature, was hired, with its driver, from the London Co-operative Society. This van was equipped with a powerful but pleasant loudspeaker.

The campaign was opened with a Press conference at which Mr. Marquand and others described its purpose and the programme to be followed. Close contact was maintained with the local Press during the week and valuable reports, sometimes with photo-

graphs, were published almost every day.

Each day there were street meetings and factory gate meetings; there were also indoor factory meetings, at which both management and shop stewards were present. At the street and factory gate meetings a variety of specially chosen literature, including the broadsheet on steel nationalisation, 'Pools Win', was distributed.

Evening Drive

In the evenings there was mass literature distribution and canvassing done by Party members, and this was supported by further street meetings. The campaign also included two Youth meetings and seven house meetings.

Over 70 party members took part in the work, chiefly in the evenings. Twenty-two thousand personal letters and campaign cards were distributed. The campaign cards are now being collected and already the returns show that many electors have indicated their willingness to help in the specific tasks of the Party.

In addressing the many meetings generous help was given by the Teesside Members of Parliament — the Rt. Hon. H. A. Marquand (Middlesbrough West), Mr. D. T. Jones (Hartlepools), Mr. G. Chetwynd (Stockton-on-Tees), Mr. J. Slater (Sedgefield), and Mr. A. Palmer (Cleveland), and by the prospective parliamentary candidate for Middlesbrough West, Mr. E. J. Fletcher. Valuable help in the running of the campaign was given by the constituency agents — Mr. Twigg (Cleveland), Mr. E. Jones (Hartlepools), and Mr. W. Gobin (Stockton-on-Tees).

The general pattern of the street meetings was for a gramophone record to attract attention and then for the speaker to give topical five- or ten-minute addresses while helpers in the streets distributed or sold literature. Then the company moved to the next stop. It was found that not much literature could be sold during these meetings in the day. Better sales were achieved by house-to-house calls in the evenings. Five hundred

ies of *The Future Labour Offers You* are sold.

Patient preparation for the campaign included the sending of a mass of personal letters requesting the help of Party members. The plans for the campaign were discussed with the district officers of Trade Unions. There was excellent operation from Trade Union representatives throughout; the joint shop wards of the ICI, for example, requested that a special meeting should be arranged for them during the campaign, and this proved a most useful point.

On the last day of the campaign, speakers addressed the queues going into football match in Middlesbrough, and a loudspeaker van toured the streets around the market place in Stockton to advertise a literature stall which had been arranged by the constituency party.

Ending on a festal note, the campaign workers and friends attended an enjoyable social evening.

Incidentally, the Rent and Ratepayers' Association in Thornaby (Middlesbrough West) invited Labour and Tory speakers to take part in a public 'Any Questions?' meeting during the week; no Tory speakers responded, but the local Labour P.s dealt ably with questions on national and local affairs before a crowded audience. The association produced graphs and pictures to illustrate the questions.

BOLSOVER ENLISTS TRADE UNION SUPPORT

THE Bolsover Constituency Labour Party has gone into the 'Into Action' campaign with a real emphasis on ACTION. Every public advertising site has been booked and filled with either double crown or 16 sheet posters advertising *The Future Labour Offers You*. In addition to 2,000 copies of the pamphlet purchased from Head Office, an additional 200 were purchased from a neighbouring constituency party, and a few are still unsold. The Derbyshire area of the National Union of Mineworkers, which is by far

the largest affiliated organisation in the constituency, is giving most valuable assistance. A meeting between the area officials and the constituency Executive Committee was held and it was agreed that further meetings be held in every village where a miners' branch exists. The constituency secretary, Alderman C. Wass, is organising meetings between the trade unions and his local parties with a view to the sale of the pamphlet at every pit head in the constituency.

The first local effort took place at Whitwell, a mining village, on Saturday, 21st February, when a joint meeting was held in the Whitwell Miners' Welfare. The principal speaker was Mrs. Bessie Braddock, M.P., and supporting speakers were Mr. Harold Neal, M.P., and Mr. H. W. Wynn, area secretary of the National Union of Mineworkers.

It turned out to be a gala day for Whitwell, with the Miners' Welfare Band heading a procession which included the principal speakers, local councillors, branch officials of the N.U.M., and party members. The joint secretaries for this effort were Mr. C. Thorpe, secretary of the Whitwell L.L.P., and Mr. Eric Cooper, secretary of the Whitwell branch of the N.U.M.

Teas were provided by the local Women's Section and in the evening there was a dancing display by pupils of Marjorie Atkins, followed by ballroom dancing.

After nine hours' continuous activity, the day's effort closed at midnight, when all went home to the air of 'Now is the Hour'.

C.W.

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Strong Seats Help Yorks Marginal

AS part of the 'Into Action' Campaign in the North-Eastern Region, a special effort has been made to secure the transference of workers from the constituency parties in the safe Labour seats, to the marginals. There is nothing new in this, but a different approach has brought more satisfactory results.

In the past, appeals produced an enthusiastic, but unsustained, response from members in the Labour strongholds. On an agreed day, a bus load of willing canvassers, whose experience was largely limited to electoral activity in areas where Labour voters were thick on the ground, would descend upon a marginal constituency.

At the end of the day there was a feeling of frustration and dissatisfaction with the amount of work done, and its results. This was not due to lack of organisation at the sending or receiving ends of the trip, but simply to the natural difficulties of handling thirty or forty people.

Time Lost

The task of getting them all gathered at the agreed time, and of having them all ready to move off to the appointed area of canvass, always meant a loss of time and, consequently, of patience, both of which are a natural breeding ground of discontent and frustration.

These human factors, and the difference in the approach to the electorate, as between a marginal and safe constituency, tended to dispel rather than foster the essential goodwill and understanding for successful co-operation.

Consequently, it was decided to invite each of the parties in the Labour strongholds to accept responsibility first, for the organising of a team of five or six workers, secondly, for providing transport and, thirdly, for arranging regular visits of the team to a marginal constituency nominated by the regional officers.

It was felt that a letter was of little use, unless it was followed up by a personal appeal to the party and the Member of Parliament. By this means, doubts were allayed and goodwill obtained, with the result that eleven teams are now operating in marginal constituencies at frequent and regular intervals.

Records are being built up, postal vote registrations increased, sales of the policy document going steadily, and a number

of new members made. The latter is of prime importance, as the main effort has been to secure records and possible vote registrations.

From this new experience, it is clear that small teams of visiting canvassers can be better trained in the art of canvassing in a marginal area, and that a greater degree of friendship can be fostered. Furthermore, the visitors gain a knowledge of the geography and character of the constituency which helps to make them more efficient.

Perhaps the most important aspect of this co-operation is that, as a General Election approaches, there is a desire on the part of the incoming canvassers to see the job through, and to use to the full the information they have assisted in gathering. This wider experience will enable them to give the maximum assistance throughout the campaign in the constituency to which they have become attached.

A possible by-product of this work is an improvement in the electoral methods in the safe constituencies.

J. T. ANSDEN

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O NEW AGENCY APPOINTMENTS

THE following Agency appointments have been approved by the National Executive Committee:

MR. W. J. ARBUCKLE to **Shoreditch and Finsbury**. A company director, 35 years of age, Bill Arbuckle has been an active worker in this constituency throughout his seven years' membership of the Party. Since 1956 he has acted as assistant secretary to the constituency party.

MR. R. BRUNTON to **Goole**. From May 1956 to August 1957 Ray Brunton was assistant organiser to the Nottinghamshire Party. He now returns to the agency ranks, after a period of 18 months in industry as a clerical officer. He is 32 years of age and has been a member of the Party for 16 years.

MR. J. STUART-COLE to **Birkenhead**. For the past three years Jim Stuart-Cole, aged 42, has been the full-time agent at Blythenshaw. A member of the Party for more than 22 years he has held most local party offices and was, for 16 years, shop steward for his trade union, the Tailormakers.

MR. J. E. COWIN to **Clitheroe**. A trade union clerk, John Cowin left the Isle of Man in 1957 to join the Agents' Training Course. On completing the course he was appointed as Organising assistant for the Manchester area. He is 28 years of age.

MR. R. DELAFIELD to **Lincoln**. Aged 28, an insurance agent from Hartlepools, Jack Delafield recently completed the Agents' Training Course. A member of the Party for nine years, he has held various local party offices.

MR. L. J. JAMES to **Cardiff South East and South West**. The appointment of a full-time organiser to cover two of the Cardiff constituencies has been filled by a former miner from Swansea, Lionel James. A member of the Party for three years, he is 28 years of age and, also, recently completed the Agents' Training course.

MR. S. JONES to **Brierley Hill**. Samuel Jones, a member of the Party for 10 years, is 26 years old. A firebrick moulder, by trade, who wishes for a more congenial form of employment, joins the agency ranks. He has held various party offices in this constituency

and is also a Staffordshire County Councillor.

MISS P. LEWIS to **Gainsborough**. Another trade union clerk joins the agency service. Pat Lewis is 24 years of age, and has been appointed as assistant agent to the Gainsborough Constituency Labour Party. She has held various offices during her eight years' membership of the High Wycombe party.

MR. A. LOMAS to **Stockport Borough**. A railway signalman, aged 30, Alfred Lomas has held various Party offices and was at one period secretary of the Stockport South Constituency Labour Party. For the past two years he has been active in the Cheadle constituency.

MISS M. TREADWELL to **Bath** as Assistant Agent. Margaret Treadwell is only 19 years of age, but has had a good insight into Party work, having been employed in the office of the Oldham Borough party. She has also had experience in a local newspaper office.

(continued from page 112)

His comments concerning committee room work on the day leave us dumbfounded. Mr. Gibbs may recall that his polling area was in the house of one of the undersigned. She knows what happened. He, and he alone, was in the committee room until late afternoon. After that he had the assistance of two, then three other persons, while he attended to knockers-up. He should have mentioned that he only saw his own committee room at work. How then can he be sure what happened in the rest of the ward, let alone the whole of Harrow East?

Agents can fight for any system they wish, we bow to their working knowledge of the best in a circumstance such as this, but it is quite untrue to say the system used was inferior to our usual system in South Stanmore. We can only speak for our ward, of course, but then, truthfully, so can Mr. Gibbs. He need not worry, the local population will bear the brunt of the General Election quite happily. We learned a lot from the by-election—after all, we in Harrow lost no seats in the borough elections!

*Mary Kinnear
Ida Moore*

DISTRICT ORGANISATION GROW

by S. E. Barker

MR. A. G. CAMERON of the Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers presided over the 1921 Annual Conference held at the Dome, Brighton.

The previous year had seen a remarkable growth of party organisation. Divisional, Local Labour Parties and Trades Councils now numbered 2,350. Membership was 4,359,807, an increase of over 800,000 in 12 months.

Every effort was to be made to consolidate and further strengthen the movement, and the general scheme of organisation made possible by the increase of affiliation fees the previous year was to assist in this task.

Men and Women

The country had been divided into the following organising districts and the men and women named had been appointed as District and Women's Organisers :

District 'A' North Eastern—Northumberland, Durham, Yorks. (Councillor E. Gibbin and Mrs. L. Anderson Fenn); District 'B' North Western—Cumberland, Westmorland, Lancashire, Cheshire, High Peak Division of Derbyshire (Mr. J. H. Standing and Mrs. F. Anderson); District 'C' Midlands—Worcs., Derbys. (except High Peak), Notts., Warwicks., Leics., Northampton, Herefords., Glos. (except Bristol), Staffs., Shrops. (Mr. H. Drinkwater and Councillor Mrs. Fawcett); District 'D' Southern and Home Counties—Middlesex, Kent, Surrey, Sussex, Hants., Beds., Berks., Bucks., Oxford (Mr. G. R. Sheppard and Miss G. Tavener); District 'E' London—Administrative County (Mr. R. T. Windle and Miss Annie Somers); District 'F' South Western—Dorset, Wilts., Soms., Devon, Cornwall and Bristol (Mr. J. H. Edwards and Mrs. A. Townley); District 'G' Eastern—Lincoln and Rutland, Norfolk, Suffolk, Hunts., Cambridge, Essex (Mrs. G. W. Holmes and Miss G. Francis); District 'H' Wales and Monmouthshire (Mr. T. C. Morris and Mrs. E. Andrews);

District 'I' Scotland (Mr. Ben Shaw and Mrs. A. Hardie).

Mr. G. R. Sheppard was all attached to Head Office as assistant to the National Agent.

The report for 1920 states that the appointments had been warmly welcomed by the parties and testimony to the value of this form of development had been received in the form of many letters of appreciation.

The total number of agents employed under the Head Office scheme and affiliated organisations was now 1,000. In May, 1920, the Agents' Association submitted a claim for an increase of wages and requested that a minimum rate for agents be established.

A Negotiating Committee was eventually set up consisting of representatives of the Employing Associations, the Agents' Association and the National Executive Committee. As a result of the negotiations the National Executive Committee, the Negotiating Committee and the Agents' Association agreed that affiliated organisations advised that the standard minimum rate for full-time agents and organisational secretaries should be £300 per annum payable from 1st June, 1920 and £330 payable from 1st January, 1921.

It was understood that the liability of the National Executive Committee was not to exceed more than the maximum grant of £40 per annum per constituency.

An Adjustments Board

An Adjustment Board was formed for the purpose of dealing with disputes. This body was to consist of three members of the Agents' Association, three members of the National Executive Committee, with power to call in representatives of the employing associations in a consultative capacity. The National Agent was to act as Secretary to the Board.

A resolution calling for an enquiry into the terms and conditions of service of Labour agents with a view to ensuring security of tenure was carried at this Conference.

During the year there had been a further group of by-elections, 34 had taken place since the 1920 Conference, of these Labour had contested 16, winning one seat and gaining five.

The gains were at Norfolk South, Dudley, Kirkaldy, Penistone and Haywood, and Radcliffe. Unfortunately, Woolwich East was lost by 683 votes in a vigorous contest.

The Rt. Hon. W. Crookes had retired owing to advancing years and Messay MacDonald contested the vacancy. It was said that there was a combination of all political forces against Labour and that it was a most scrupulous fight on the part of Labour's opponents.

During the course of the year the National Executive Committee had received considerable correspondence from the Communist Party, and it had decided to reject an application for affiliation on the grounds that the objects of the Communist Party were clearly not in accord with the Constitution, Principles and Policy of the Labour Party.

Communist Party Affiliation

In conjunction with this paragraph of Report, Conference debated a motion moved by the Norwood Labour Party to effect that the Conference should agree to the affiliation of the Communist Party on condition that the Constitution of the Labour Party was accepted and that the Rules of the Communist Party were brought into conformity with those of the Labour Party. This was seconded on behalf of the London Trades Council, and was supported by Mr. A. J. Cook on behalf of the Miners' Federation.

However, Herbert Smith of the Yorkshire Miners made it perfectly clear that a majority of the miners were not prepared to accept communism, and the only conditions upon which they would support the affiliation of the Communist Party was that this organisation conformed to the Constitution, Principles and Policy of the Labour Party.

There was a heated debate during the course of which an amendment was

moved on behalf of the Social Democratic Federation endorsing the action of the National Executive Committee in refusing affiliation on the grounds that their policy was avowedly sectional and disruptive.

Finally, previous question was moved and was carried by 4,115,000 to 224,000. The Executive Committee's decision to refuse affiliation was then carried by an overwhelming majority.

CANDIDATES

THE following were endorsed as prospective Parliamentary Candidates by the National Executive Committee recently:

Folkestone and Hythe	Mr. W. E. Simpkins
Tottenham	Mr. A. G. Brown
South West Norfolk	Mr. A. V. Hilton
Chichester	Mr. J. S. Spooner
Dewsbury	Mr. D. Ginsburg
Denbigh	Mr. S. Williams
North Angus and Mearns	Mr. R. Hughes
Argyll	Mr. D. Nisbet
North East	
Derbyshire	Mr. S. Mellors
Liverpool, Walton	Mr. G. McCartney
Chelsea	Mr. L. Goldstone
Enfield West	Mr. G. Hickman
Ruislip-Northwood	Mr. J. L. King
Peterborough	Miss B. Boothroyd
Bath	Mr. G. E. Mayer
Rye	Mr. D. S. Tilbe
Penistone	Mr. J. J. Mendelson
Gower	Mr. I. Davies

★

WITHDRAWAL OF CANDIDATURE

Melton	Mr. R. Gregson
King's Lynn	Mr. A. V. Hilton
Howden	Mr. R. E. Middleton
Tonbridge	Mr. R. L. Fagg

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